What are the 4 Cs of a Successful Online Business?
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This is a puzzle for many a business owner. The majority of business managers and owners look to build web traffic using search engine optimisation or search engine marketing.

Yes, building web traffic volume is very important to the success of your online business. Keep in mind that NOT all web visitor traffic is equal. Traffic for traffic volume alone is a total waste of your time and resources. You need the right kind of quality traffic – targeted and interested potential customers!

Now let's take a step back and think about what your web traffic visitors will be expected to do once they reach your web site? What is the point of investing money to generate traffic if your website is not working for your business?

Before engaging in traffic building programs let's make sure that when potential customers visits your web pages you will be ready for them.

The four Cs are Content >> Credibility >> Conversions >> Customers

These four Cs are crucial factors for a successful online web business presence. A fully productive online business contributes by maximising new opportunities from the interested web traffic visiting your site.

1. **Content**

Let's start with the first C - Content. Many of you readers would have heard of this phrase "Content is King". Your web content must be relevant, interesting, useful and engaging to your target customers.

It is not what you want to publish as your content, it is what your target customers what to see and read on your web pages. It is not your site it is theirs and you must provide what they are looking for. You must frame all your web content around 'What's in it for me' –the potential customer. Your web content must focus on the benefits and advantages of using your product or service in relation to your new potential customer.

2. **Credibility**

Credibility is the second C. A large majority of your web visitors will be unfamiliar with either you as the business owner or with your business. You will need to be aware that these visitors will view your web content in terms of potential risks (i.e. is this genuine?). In addition, various friction factors on your web pages may further discourage interaction and taking the 'call to action' that you may be offering.

You will need to take up the challenge by providing social proof, credibility symbols and service delivery commitments or guarantees.

Social proof comes in the form of positive reviews or comments, reference case studies and testimonials preferably in video format. Credibility symbols are demonstrated by industry or association certifications or license qualifications. Service level commitments including guarantees supported by recognition of your brand image and reputation will support your online credibility.

In addition, you will need to reduce and where possible eliminate any friction factors from your web pages and content. As an example many web sites have subscription forms requiring the potential subscriber to provide a multitude of information that is beyond what is immediately required. At the bare minimum all you need is their email addresses perhaps their first name, a link to your privacy policy and terms of use – less is more! This set-up will minimise the 'friction factor' resulting from a long subscription form requiring information beyond what is really needed. The more information you request for submission is a friction factor. The lack of a privacy policy and conditions in using their information is another friction factor.

Web stores where shipping costs are revealed late in the purchasing process will suffer from high cart abandon rates. Upfront visibility of shipping costs reduces this friction factor.

Establishing credibility and lessening friction factors increases your opportunities for successful conversion of your web visitors at your online web business presence.

Next let's look at how we can 'convert' our interested web visitors by their taking the 'call to action' on your web pages. All your web pages must have a specific business objective and a corresponding 'call to action' to allow your web visitor to take the desired action supporting of your objective.

3. Conversions

On a web store, conversion is the purchase of the desired product. On a business subscription site conversion would be the enrolment and payment of the program fee or plan. On a business services site that requires a longer selling and nurturing cycle a conversion success could be the sign-up to a newsletter, download of information documentation or articles, sign-up to a free trial or demonstration site or submission of an enquiry web form.

One has to apply a technique called 'conversion-persuasion scenarios' in designing your web layout and content. Make it as easy as possible for your interested web visitor to find the relevant information and content, build your credibility, reduce friction factors with content that encourages them to take the desired 'call to action' achieving your conversion objectives.

4. Customers

The last C is securing a real paying customer. For a business to consumer (B2C) web stores, conversion is the actual purchase at the online store of a product to become a customer. The customer's experience will include the online purchasing process, shipping and delivery combined with the quality and condition of the product to meet their expectations. A favourable experience will increase the receptiveness for repeat business and referrals to other potential customers.

For a business to business (B2B) online web presence, conversion is a qualified lead generated. Now depending on the nature of complexity of the product or service the generated lead will require further nurturing and relationship building before a prospect becomes a customer.

The success of your online web business presence will be measured in terms of 'call to action' conversions NOT web traffic volume. Your conversions translate to business growth and development. Establish those KPIs that reflect your online business objectives and measure these results to track and fine-tune your web. Look at actual conversions or online sales and % conversions / traffic volume as the measure of the quality of your online business and your ability to achieve your desired business results.

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I appreciate your feedback and would like to hear from you on how you are handling these marketing challenges, send your comments to patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au.

About the Author
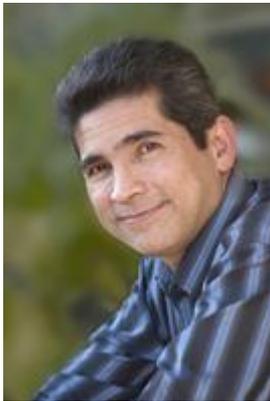
Patrick Zuluaga has more than 20 years experience in marketing and business development roles with Australian and international companies. He is Director of PMZ Marketing, a consultancy focused on Small and Medium Enterprises to **help you succeed in business with better marketing results**.

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